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ABSTRACT

This report develops an overview of foreign language education in West German public schools. The information examined in the study includes: (1) program data and list of participants, (2) outline for study tour itinerary, (3) overview of the German school system, (4) the comprehensive school, (5) bilingual foreign language instruction, (6) German-as-a-second-language instruction, (7) the John F. Kennedy German-American Community School in West Berlin, (8) teacher inservice education, and (9) random observations. (RL)

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REPORT OF A THREE-WEEK STUDY TOUR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Title of Program: Guest Program of the Federal Republic of Germany for Foreign Language Supervisors of the United States of America

Sponsor: German Federal Foreign Office, Federal Republic of Germany

Dates: October 26 through November 16, 1971

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OUTLINE FOR STUDY TOUR ITINERARY

A. Bonn - (October 26 - 28, 1971)

1. Briefing by Dr. Barbara Jaschke of the Foreign Office

2. Visit to the Secretariat of the Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Lander - Informative talk on the organization and administration of German educational systems with emphasis on the teaching of foreign languages

3. Visit to the Cusanus Gymnasium and its special program for students who do not speak German as their first language

4. Visit to Teacher Training College, Rheinland, Department Bonn; informative talk with the dean concerning training for foreign language teachers for primary and secondary schools

5. Cultural visit to the Bonn Opera House

B. Dusseldorf - (October 28 - November 3, 1971)

1. Meeting with minister of education concerning an overview of the school system of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia

2. Visit to the Evangelical Grundschule and observation of English language instruction in the primary school

3. Visit to the Office of Radio Instruction in Cologne and an overview of school radio

4. Visit to the central office of North Rhine-Westphalia for teacher inservice and informative talk with the director in charge of foreign language teacher inservice

5. Visit to the German-English bilingual program at the Geschwister-Scholl Gymnasium and observation of a geography class taught in English to German-speaking students

6. Visit to the German-French bilingual kindergarten at St. Gertrud and observation of French instruction by two exchange teachers from France

7. Cultural visits to the Dusseldorf Opera House, to Wuppertal and its monorail system of public transportation, and to the museum of prehistory at Neanderthal

C. Berlin (November 3 - 8, 1971)

1. Visit to the Leibniz Oberschule (secondary school) and observation of a fifth-year French class and a sixth-year English class

2. Visit to the John F. Kennedy German-American bilingual school and brief observation of kindergarten and primary classes

3. Informative talk with the senior superintendent of schools and visit to the Town Hall at the invitation of the Berlin Senate

4. Visit to the Max Planck Institute for Educational Research and informative talk with the director

5. Cultural visits to the Berlin Opera House and a performance of Lehar's "The Merry Widow on Ice"; sightseeing tour of West Berlin and visits to museums; self-conducted group visit to East Berlin and visits to museums

D. Hamburg (November 8 - 11, 1971)

1. Meeting at the Institute for Inservice Training of Teachers and an informative talk on the teaching of foreign languages in the city-state of Hamburg

2. Visit to the Helene Lange Gymnasium for Girls and observation of a twelfth grade class in French, and a sixth grade class in English which was preparing to enter the German-English bilingual stream

3. Visit to a Volkschule in Cranz, a suburb of Hamburg, and observation of classes in German as a second language for Turkish students who comprise 20 percent of the school population of 420 students

4. Meeting with the senator for education of the city-state of Hamburg

5. Visit to an elementary school in the environs of Hamburg, where a German translation of Van Deventer's junior high school science materials (Michigan Science Curriculum Committee Junior High School Project) were being used

6. Private interview with an individual from the Ministry of Education who coordinates German as a second language instruction and instruction in the regular German curriculum for the foreign students in Hamburg

7. Cultural visit to the State Opera House of Hamburg for the premiere of an opera written by a Jew; a boat tour of the port of Hamburg

E. Munich (November 11 - 16, 1971)

1. Meeting at the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and an informative talk about foreign language instruction in Bavaria

2. Visit to Munchen-Nord Gesamtschule (pilot comprehensive school) and observation of English instruction in the fifth and sixth grades; unexpected debate between a teacher from a gymnasium and a teacher of the comprehensive school concerning the future of German education and the merits of the "comprehensive school" concept

3. Visit to Teacher Inservice Training Center in the town of Dillingen/Donau and observation of inservice seminar on the theme of teaching "Freedom and Peace" in the classroom

4. Visit to the Audiovisual Institute in Munich and viewing of films used in foreign language instruction developed by the German A-V institutes

5. Cultural visit to the National Theater of Munich and excursions to oberammergau, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, and the Zugspitze (highest Alpine peak in Germany).

Overview of the German School System

The Federal Republic of Germany is divided into eleven lander or states, including West Berlin and the two independent city-states of Bremen and Hamburg. Within this federation, which came into existence in 1949, each state retained its rights, especially regarding education. However, the eleven ministers and senators for education (West Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg have senators for education, rather than ministers) confer on a regular basis to discuss the problems of education and thus assure a relative uniformity of school standards throughout the country. Although the decisions made at these conferences have no legal basis, the fact that such educational decisions must be unanimous imposes a certain responsibility on each minister to have these educational recommendations enacted into legislation within his own state. A child in the Germany of today can move from state to state and find acceptance of his educational credentials.

German education is related to the systems found in other European countries and presents a system of paths or streams, at the apex of which is the institution of the gymnasium. At the risk of oversimplifying a school system on the basis of only a three-week acquaintance, the following overview is offered merely to illuminate the nature of the educational visits delineated earlier and to perhaps make more meaningful some of the personal, general observations which will be presented later.

At the base of the German school system is the grundschule, or primary school, which takes children six years of age for four years of schooling. In some lander, however, primary school may last for six years. Infant schools and kindergartens are not as yet common in Germany, although there

is a great interest in such programs, with studies being made of the American development of the kindergarten concept. Most of the existing nursery schools and kindergartens are funded through the church, industry, or private means. In the primary schools, instruction is provided by a classroom teacher, although it should be noted that there are trends toward a reform of the primary curriculum and toward the use of subject matter specialist teachers.

At the conclusion of the fourth year of the grundschule, a child may enter one of the three mainstreams of German secondary education, the hauptschule, the realschule, or the gymnasium. The decision as to which stream the child will enter is a purely judgmental one, made by the elementary school, although parents have the right to contest this decision and to have their children enter the gymnasium, for example, on a trial basis. Whichever school the child enters, the law requires that he start a foreign language in the fifth grade, per the Hamburg Agreement of 1964, which stated that this first foreign language had to be English or in the gymnasium, Latin, provided that the second language chosen be English. A more recent agreement permits the selection of any modern foreign language in the fifth grade, although English will be chosen by most students, with French following in popularity, especially in southern Germany.

Students attend the hauptschule from five to six years, where they are provided with general subject matter instruction and a less intensive, more practical approach to the study of foreign language. The realschule, which is somewhat akin to the high school in the United States, concludes with the tenth grade and enables the student to enter the minor professions or middle management, or even the upper grades of the gymnasium. The classic gymnasium is a nine-year program, ending with an examination called the abitur, which permits entry into any university without further examination. There are

three types of gymnasia: the humanistic, based on the study of Latin, Greek and modern language; the scientific, in which two foreign languages are compulsory; and the modern language gymnasium. Although the classical language gymnasium still exists, it is losing more and more ground to either the scientific or modern language gymnasium. Students may leave the gymnasium after only six years of study with a certificate similar to that earned by the graduates of the realschule.

Beyond this simple description of the secondary schools lies a full range of vocational and technical schools, professional schools, teacher training institutions, special schools, and even variations of the secondary schools within individual states. There are also the universities which may be more or less compared to our graduate schools. To attempt to describe these, however, would require a longer period of observation and study.

General and Personal Observations

It appears to me that the German educational system is in a state of flux and, as such, afforded the study group an opportunity to make certain observations of general as well as specific interest.

Comprehensive School

One idea which greatly intrigued the group was the gesumtschule or comprehensive school, which takes the form of either the Swedish comprehensive school or the United States high school, or sometimes both, and admits students of all intellectual abilities. This concept is closely related to the political situation of Germany, as is much of the German education system. Within the political scheme, there is a traditional, conservative view reflected by the Christian Democrat party, and a liberal view reflected by the Social Democrat party. Pilot comprehensive schools have been set up in each of the lander and are viewed by the Social Democrats as a means of providing social

integration within Germany and as a means of providing the students with equality of opportunity. Although the comprehensive school presents problems in terms of curriculum and organization, the issue arouses more heated debate in sociological and intellectual terms. Another issue closely allied to the comprehensive school is that of the longer school day. Presently, most German children attend school from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the schools are not generally able to provide lunchroom facilities. The pilot comprehensive school which our group observed in Munich observes a longer school day and has a pavillion-type (mobile) lunchroom facility, which serves family-style meals consisting of foods frozen in trays in portions to feed ten persons. Whether their feelings were pro or con concerning the concepts of the comprehensive school and of the longer school day, every administrator and teacher with whom our group spoke expressed the hope that these issues be given adequate time for piloting before full acceptance.

Bilingual Foreign Language Instruction

In about one hundred schools throughout Germany, an attempt is being made to provide bilingual German-French instruction to children in kindergarten. An exchange program has been set up with France, whereby Germany sends German teachers to France to teach German to preschool children. An equal number of French teachers come to Germany to teach French. The salaries of the exchange teachers are paid by their own country. The young French teachers whom we observed working in a kindergarten that was run by a church are fluent in German and appeared to be well-trained in the principles of early childhood education, in addition to being exceptionally well-skilled

in the techniques of second language instruction. Their French language instruction to four-and-five-year-old children closely parallels the psychomotor development of the children. All the children in the kindergarten program are provided with this bilingual instruction, which lasts 15 to 20 minutes and is done in small groups.

Bilingual programs were also observed at the gymnasium level in several schools. There is no one model used as a prototype but the second language generally chosen for bilingual instruction is English. In one program, the school started its bilingual program with three parallel classes of ten-year olds, who are provided with nine classes of English per week, instead of the usual seven classes. In the second year of the program, the children are regrouped on the basis of grades and language aptitude and one of the three classes is identified as the bilingual class. The experimental class continues to receive additional English language instruction, followed by music instruction in English by a native English-speaking Canadian exchange teacher. Eventually, English instruction in geography and history are offered in this bilingual program. It would appear that the choice subject matter instruction in English depends to a large extent upon the availability of native English-speaking exchange personnel and upon the subject matter skills of individual teachers. For example, mathematics and science instruction are not offered in English because of the general lack of mathematic and science teachers in Germany.

Another bilingual program at the gymnasium level selects students for the program through a battery of tests, consisting of a test of concentration, a test used to measure phonetic discrimination, and an "associative learning test" which appears to be a combination achievement and IQ test in addition to being a test of memory.

It may generally be said that these bilingual programs are in the experimental stage and that no real conclusions can yet be made. The aim of several of the programs which we observed is not so much to produce true bilinguals as to view certain subjects from another point of view and to produce students with a better command of English than those who have English in their schools strictly as a foreign language. In this respect, it should be noted that, in local instances, attempts are made to begin the study of English in the third grade of the grandschule, rather than in the fifth grade of secondary instruction.

German As a Second Language Instruction

Since 1963, the German labor market has imported millions of "guest" laborers every year, hiring them on yearly contracts, but a majority remain for at least two years before returning to their native countries. Among such national groups are Turks, Greeks, Yugoslavs, Italians, some Spanish and Portuguese, and more recently, especially in Bavaria, British. Generally, an attempt is made to integrate the children into the regular classrooms after a period of intensive German language instruction. In one instance, at a gymnasium which serves children of foreign professionals and government employees, children between the ages of ten and fifteen spend six months to a year in the intensive, all-day German program before being integrated into the regular curriculum. In this all-day program half the time is spent in German language instruction with emphasis on visuals and half the time in teaching German geared to subject matter instruction. It should be noted that students older than fifteen years were not admitted to this gymnasium; rather, it was recommended that they study German at special adult foreign language institutes.

In other parts of Germany, it was noted that the older children of the guest workers generally did not attend school; this was explained as a cultural

difference. In Germany, the law requires children to attend school for at least nine or ten years. In some of the countries from which the guest workers come, the educational requirement is seven or eight years; hence the reluctance of some of the parents to send their older children to school for these extra years.

In a private interview with an administrator who coordinates German-as-a-second-language instruction for the children of the guest workers, mention was made of the fact that with a few exceptions, there is no concentration of a particular language group in any one school; nor is there any one school with a heavy concentration of non-German-speaking children. The concentration of children of one group in a particular school was viewed by this individual as a "ghetto" situation and something to be avoided. Mention was also made of the interest maintained by some of the foreign governments in the education of their citizens' children. Two foreign governments were cited as paying their own teachers to go from school to school to provide the children with instruction in their own native language so that the children could return to schools in their own country without any language handicap. This may be one of the reasons why bilingual instruction is not viewed by the German school system as an alternative to German-as-a-second language instruction for children of the guest workers.

One school visited by our group was an exception in that it has a 20 percent population of Turkish speakers; the young children are provided with four to five classes per week of audiolingual visual instruction in German. Otherwise, the children are integrated into the regular classes of their age group. During the German instruction which we observed, it was curious to note that the children spoke among themselves in German rather than in Turkish. Because

of the reluctance of the regular classroom teacher to provide German-as-a-second-language instruction to the Turkish children - their responsibility is to educate the German children - the administrator of this school was successful in obtaining the services of an extra teacher for such instruction. He was further successful in obtaining the services of a Turkish national teacher who is bilingual and able to provide German-as-a-second-language instruction. Since the Turkish teacher was not certified to teach in Germany, however, he could only be employed on a part-time basis (eleven hours per week). In addition to the above services, the school also had the services of a teacher who was sent to the school by the Turkish consulate for four hours per week to teach Turkish to the children.

Some comments made at this school by administrators and teachers are the following: the Turks prefer that girls not attend school; they do not want their girls to take sports, especially from a male teacher; the children come to school either too early or too late; there is no problem with the Turkish children - rather the problem lies with the German parents who complain of too much interest being shown to the Turkish children; the Turkish parents are not interested in coming to school meetings to discuss their problems; on the other hand, when the German teachers visit the homes of the Turks to ask them to come to the meetings to discuss their problems, the parents insist that they have no problems. Naturally, these comments reflect a variety of opinions. Another comment concerns the lack of adequate money for special books and language equipment.

John F. Kennedy German-American Community School (West Berlin): The school is located in a suburban section of West Berlin and 95 percent of its students are bused to the school by American military buses. This unique institution, based on international cooperation, merits special consideration for several reasons. Founded in 1960 with only two primary grade levels and with no research into bilingual, bicultural education, the school symbolizes a successful experiment in fusing two educational systems in a bilingual, bicultural setting. The school presently has a program for kindergarten through grade 13 and on the surface would appear to be a combination of the comprehensive school and the gymnasium. However, since it does not have an adequate mix of the types of students who would attend the hauptschule, the realschule, and the gymnasium, it does not qualify according to the strict definition of the comprehensive school.

Students begin to follow a bilingual program by at least the third grade. Students unable to follow a bilingual program are advised to seek a monolingual program at another school. The "streaming" for the bilingual program is done as follows:

German 1 - mother-tongue instruction
German 2 - "partner" tongue instruction
German 3 - for new arrivals
English 1 - mother-tongue instruction
English 2 - "partner" tongue instruction
English 3 - for new arrivals
English 4 - for "late bloomers"

American students new to the program usually spend one-half to one year in an English program before moving to the German part of the curriculum. Sex instruction begins in the first grade and more intensive instruction is

given through the biology program, which was the pattern observed in other schools in Germany. In some schools, drug education seems to be left to local school policy; in other schools, it is left either to the individual teacher's discretion or incorporated into the biology program.

The school population, as well as the teaching staff, has a mixture of 50 percent Germans, 40 percent Americans, and 10 percent of other nationalities. The school is administered by a German and an American principal. The German staff remains quite stable; American staff members hired on a two-year contract, generally remain for two or three years; third country national teachers remain for five to ten years. Newly arrived American teachers are required to attend an inservice institute for three weeks prior to the opening of school. The inservice education, which includes language instruction, is conducted by the "partner" German national department head. German teachers new to the school also have a period of inservice, including instruction in English. Every year in February, the school holds a workshop for curriculum development and inservice education.

The school grants three types of diplomas. Students may leave after the tenth year with a realschule diploma. American students may obtain a high school diploma after the twelfth year, and German students may continue through a thirteenth year in preparation for the abitur. The school has an education board which acts in both an advisory and supervisory capacity. The board is made up of five German and five American representatives, including two Americans and two German parent representatives.

Teacher Inservice Education

In the states where the study group observed teacher inservice education, the programs were coordinated at a central level, with directors of inservice education for each of the subject matter areas. The directors organized

week-long seminars and workshops, which were planned at least a year in advance and published in a bulletin that was sent to all teachers within the state. In a city-state such as Hamburg, the inservice was conducted in a central office. In larger states, such as Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia, inservice was generally conducted in rented facilities and even in a permanent facility such as a remodeled seminary complex of buildings.

Participation in inservice programs is voluntary on the part of the teacher, although, in some cases, teachers may be recommended to attend certain workshops. Inservice education is held during regular school hours, and the teachers are provided with meals and accommodations free of charge. If necessary, teachers are given a travel allowance and travel time. Some of the inservice training is of a practical, workshop nature, but most is of the informational type. A typical inservice day consists of a lecture and a workshop in the morning, followed by another workshop and lecture in the afternoon. Foreign language inservice topics include work in grammar, general pedagogy, testing, the writing of drills, and language lab instruction.

Some inservice programs are used to produce actual curriculum materials, which are then distributed to the schools within the state. One such week-long workshop, for example, was observed in Bavaria. The topic was the teaching of freedom and peace in the classroom and it attracted teachers from all levels of the German educational system.

Random Observations

- Teachers in Germany are civil servants.
- All school administrators are required to teach at least one class.
- Two percent of the budget for a new school building must be spent on a work of art for the school, generally a mural, stained glass window, or a piece of sculpture in the foyer of the building.
- There is a most favorable climate in Germany for foreign language instruction, especially instruction in English. Language is viewed as a means of human communication and as a necessity for the exchange of ideas within the various professions.
- There are about 550 audiovisual centers in Germany. In foreign language instruction, the emphasis has shifted from producing tapes for foreign language laboratories to film-making. More super-8 films are being produced than 16 mm films with sound.
- In Bavaria, the retraining of teachers is being done through TV inservice programs. When there was a shortage of teachers in English, instruction was given via television. The regular classroom teacher viewed the broadcast the night before it was presented to students in the classroom. Television was also used to present new foreign language methodology to the teachers.
- In some advanced foreign language classes, literature is given a broader definition and includes the study of newspapers and current affairs. In one audiovisual center, tapes were made of foreign news broadcasts and distributed to the teachers, along with the text of the broadcast and at least one or two newspaper photographs that pertained to the news item.
- Teachers in Germany have a period of internship (student teaching) which lasts one and a half to two years.